

ERIE COUNTY GOVERNMENT

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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Dear County of Erie Employee:

Welcome to Erie County Government. You are joining a group of dedicated men and women whose primary objective is to provide the best possible services to the citizens of Erie County.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with historical and current information about Erie County and Erie County Government, information about the personnel policies and procedures that will govern your employment and information about your employee benefits programs.

It is important for you to understand that this handbook in total or in part does not constitute a contract between the County and you or between the County and any other employee or group of employees. The County has unilateral discretion to add, delete or modify statements in this handbook.

This handbook reflects the County's concern for the well being of you and every other County employee.

Please read the handbook carefully and keep it handy for future reference. Should you have any question about any topic in this handbook or a topic not referenced in this handbook, please feel free to contact the Human Resources Department.

Sincerely,

The Office of Human Resources and Labor Relations

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INTRODUCTION

The Employee Handbook

The information contained in this handbook applies to all permanent-status County personnel, which includes over 1000 employees. It covers your benefits, rights, and responsibilities as an employee of the County of Erie. Some sections of the handbook also apply to per-diem/temporary employees; however, as a general rule, per-diem/temporary employees do **not** receive fringe benefits unless identified as being entitled to a specific benefit under the appropriate section of this handbook.

The employee handbook may not contain all the information you need. The complete details of the subject matter covered in this handbook can be found in the Erie County Personnel Code, in the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual and/or in your Union labor agreement. This employee handbook is not intended to supersede or provide a legal interpretation of the County's Home Rule Charter, Civil Service guidelines, federal, state, or local rules and regulations, or any other official document. Therefore, the policies and/or procedures described within this handbook do not create a contract between the County of Erie and any employees either individually or collectively. Moreover, the Human Resources Department expressly reserves the right to modify or delete any of the policies and/or practices contained herein without prior notice.

Your Job as a County Employee

Your job is important, not only to you, but to those responsible for directing the activities of Erie County. As an employee, you have a responsibility to the County - that of performing your job in the best and most efficient manner of which you are capable. The success of providing services to the public is not a result of the efforts of a few, but of the combined efforts of every person associated with the County.

PAST TO PRESENT

Brief History of Erie County

Erie County's name was derived from the Eriez Indians, a tribe speaking an Iroquois language, but not part of the Iroquois Confederacy. About the year 1653, the Eriez tribe was conquered and destroyed by the Iroquois of the Confederacy, who then dominated the region until the coming of the white man.

The earliest evidence that white men knew about the territory can be found in the Mandeville map of 1740 which shows French Creek and Lake LeBoeuf, the small lake near present-day Waterford.

Presque Isle Bay does not appear on maps until 1753, when the French under Marin built Fort Presque Isle as the opening wedge of their campaign to seize control of the Ohio Valley. They then cut a military road through the woods and swamps to Lake LeBoeuf, where a second fort was built. In December 1753, George Washington came to Fort LeBoeuf bearing a message from the Governor of Virginia which gave notice to the French that they were trespassing on British territory. The rejection of the message by the French led to the French and Indian War, as a result of which the French lost Canada. Also, since the British captured Fort Duquesne in 1758 (present day Pittsburgh) and Fort Niagara in 1759, the French were then compelled to abandon, burn and destroy Forts Presque Isle and LeBoeuf in August, 1759. The forts and territory were then relinquished to the British until the Revolutionary War.

In 1788, with the urging of William Irvine, Pennsylvania purchased the triangular piece of land known as Erie County from the United States government for about \$152,000, considerably more than William Penn had paid for all the rest of Pennsylvania (about \$80,000). American settlement did not begin until 1795. General Anthony Wayne's victory over the western Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, and various treaties to purchase the Indian title to the land, finally lessened the danger. In 1794, Captain Ebenezer Denny led a military expedition of more than a hundred men from Pittsburgh to Waterford, where he built the American Fort LeBoeuf.

In 1795 a force under Captain John Grubb was sent to Erie and built American Fort Presque Isle. This was not on the site of the two earlier forts but on Garrison Hill within the present grounds of the Soldiers and Sailors Home. The first settlers in Erie County came from Eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and New England. The influence of New England can easily be traced in the life and customs and especially in the architecture of the earlier period. The City of Erie was laid out in 1795 by General Andrew Ellicot, the first Surveyor-General of the United States, and since that time Erie has enjoyed a steady growth.

Erie County was part of Allegheny County until March 12, 1800, when an act was passed by the Legislature of Pennsylvania creating Erie, Beaver, Butler, Mercer, Crawford, Warren, Venango and Armstrong Counties. Since there were only 1,468 people within the area of Erie County, the organization of County government was delayed until 1803. The county seat was the town of Erie, which was incorporated as a borough in 1805.

Erie was one of the few American settlements on Lake Erie in 1812 when war broke out with Great Britain and its strategic importance became apparent. To guard against threatened attack and invasion, the citizens organized a company of minute men. Later, other militia forces were sent by the State to guard the harbor, especially after it became a naval base with shipyards for construction of an American fleet. Naval control of Lake Erie would determine the fate of the Northwest Territory.

In the autumn of 1812, Daniel Dobbins began the construction of gunboats at the mouth of Lee's Run at the foot of Sassafras Street in Erie. In the following spring, work began on two brigs, the Lawrence and Niagara, at the mouth of Cascade Creek (foot of Cascade Street). By August 4, 1813, the new American fleet had crossed the bar of Presque Isle Bay and was ready to meet the enemy. The story of the Battle of Lake Erie on September 10, 1813, has often been told - how Perry turned defeat into victory by transferring from the hopelessly disabled Lawrence to the Niagara, bringing the Niagara into close action, and forcing the British squadron to surrender. Perry's famous message to General Harrison: "We have met the enemy and they are ours" was written from the Niagara.

Erie County developed rapidly after the war as a result of various improvements in transportation. Today much diversity of industries, agriculture and their products can be found.

History of the Erie County Courthouse

Before the first official Courthouse was erected in 1808, County offices were located at the George Buehler Tavern, at the northeast corner of Third and French Streets, the Log Jail on Second and Holland and then at the Brown Building across from the Buehler's Tavern. Space had to be rented in these places until enough money was raised to build the first Courthouse, which was located in West Perry Square just north of where the Soldiers and Sailors monument stands today. Unfortunately, a fire destroyed this building and all its contents on March 23, 1823.

Thereafter, the County Commissioners set up temporary quarters at the Erie Academy until the second Courthouse was built on the same site as the former one. It was completed in 1825 and County offices were settled into a separate building directly west of the Courthouse. At the main Courthouse hung a bell, which had been captured in the Battle of Lake Erie, and it announced sessions of court, meetings, concerts, political gatherings and passage of time.

Along with the transition of Erie into a city in 1851 came the demand from the public for better Courthouse accommodations. To satisfy this need, County Commissioners decided to build a third

Courthouse on West Sixth Street on land that they had already acquired. Plans by Thomas U. Walter, a prominent Philadelphia architect were adopted in 1852. This third building is the present day west wing to which an east wing was built in 1929 due to overcrowding of the offices that served the Erie County area.

Then in 1965, the County Commissioners again made plans for adding on due to the expansion of County services. More offices were added to the back of the Courthouse and a modernized prison was built by 1977. In 1988 plans were initiated by the County Executive to add more office space in the basement of the Courthouse.

Due to the increased need for additional space to house incarcerated offenders, a new prison located at 18th & Ash Street was dedicated on November 10, 1994. The original prison located in the Courthouse was converted to a Pre-Release Center for non-violent offenders. The Pre-Release Center was moved to a new facility located adjacent to the Erie County Prison in 2007. The space formally occupied by the Prelease Center was turned into administrative offices in 2008.

History of the Erie County Library

The Erie Public Library was established in 1897, the first in Pennsylvania to be organized under the Free Library Act of 1895, providing that public libraries could be established under school district auspices. The formal dedication of the building at 27 South Park Row took place on February 16, 1899.

In October 1979, the Erie City and County Library was taken over by Erie County government. Administration spearheaded the takeover and signed an agreement with the School District of the City of Erie. The agreement reduced annual funding by the school district until contributions ceased on July 1, 1982, the first time since 1899 that the library did not receive appropriations from the Erie School District.

With the change in financial support came other major changes. The name of the library became the Erie County Library System. The library became a department of County Government and an Advisory Board was appointed, and all the staff became County rather than School District employees in 1982.

In 1996, after nearly 100 years of service, the main library on South Park Row closed its doors for the last time. The System name was changed back to the Erie County Public Library and a new main library, the Raymond M. Blasco, M.D. Memorial Library was erected on Erie's bayfront. This facility was named after Dr. Blasco because of a generous endowment to the library through the Erie Community Foundation. The Erie County community contributed significant funding for the building.

Erie County Government Organization

Erie County Government encompasses three primary branches: the County Executive (Executive Branch), the 7-member County Council (Legislative Branch), and the Court of Common Pleas (Judicial Branch). This organizational structure is the same as the structure for the Federal and Pennsylvania governments.

***History:** Up until January 1, 1978, three Commissioners, who shared both legislative and executive responsibilities, ran County Government operations in Erie County. This type of government was mandated by the State until April 13, 1972, when the Home Rule Charter and Optional Plans Act were passed. This new legislation opened up to Pennsylvania counties a method that they could use to reorganize their governmental structure. Erie County was one of the few counties in which the citizens adopted a Home Rule Charter type of government on November 2, 1976. Now the citizens elect one County*

Executive and seven members to serve on County Council. This type of government provide for the separation of executive and legislative powers that are traditional in American government.

County Executive: The executive/administrative power is vested in the County Executive. He/she holds office for a four-year term and is elected by Erie County voters. For Council consideration to approve or reject, the Executive presents an annual budget, and as circumstances dictate, ordinances and resolutions.

County Council: The legislative power is vested in County Council. Each of the seven Council members holds office for a four-year term and is elected by voters residing in the council district he/she represents. Council has the responsibility to pass on the annual budget, on ordinances and on resolutions, as proposed by the County Executive. In this process, Council has the power to pass with or without modification or reject outright the County Executive's presented budget, ordinance or resolution. If passed unmodified, it becomes law. If Council passes a modified budget, ordinance or resolution, it must be presented to the County Executive. If the County Executive approves, as modified, he/she will sign it and it becomes law. If the County Executive does not approve the modified version, he/she shall return it to Council with his/her objections. Council must reconsider, and if Council approves it by a two-thirds vote, it shall become law.

Court of Common Pleas: The judicial power of the County is vested in the Court of Common Pleas and their judicial power extends to all cases in law and equity. Each judge holds office for a ten-year term and is elected by County of Erie voters.

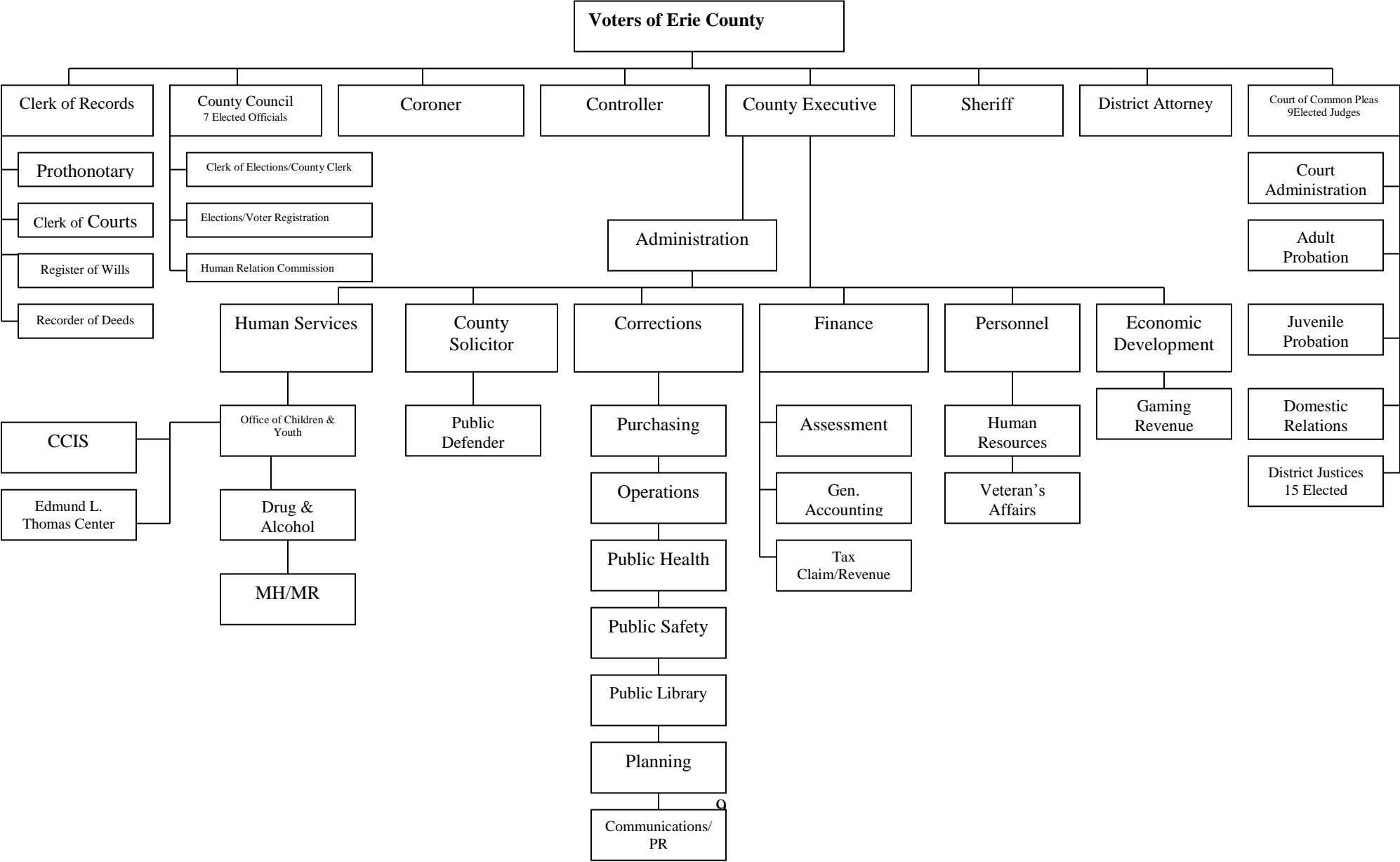
Other Elected Officials: There are five other elected officials: the District Attorney, the Clerk of Records, the Coroner, the Controller, and the Sheriff. Each official holds office for a four-year term and is elected by Erie County voters.

Services Provided by County Offices

Erie County government serves over 275,000 County residents in the areas of children's services, criminal and civil courts, drug and alcohol abuse, elections, employment, legal services, library services, licensing, mental health/mental retardation, operations, planning, probation, public health and safety, record services, support services, tax services, and veterans services. The duties performed by these offices are described in detail within **The Guide to Public Services**. A copy can be found in each department or at the County Executive's Office.

Locations of all the Erie County offices are printed in the **Government Directory** for the County of Erie, which is a small booklet containing all County employee names and office phone numbers.

ERIE COUNTY GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



PERSONNEL CODE

The purpose of the Personnel Code is to establish and maintain uniform personnel policies and procedures as specified in the Erie County Home Rule Charter. The Director of Personnel is responsible for maintaining an up-to-date Personnel Code by preparing, as circumstances dictate, amendments for consideration by the County Executive and County Council. You may review the copy of the Personnel Code in your department or the copy in the Human Resources Department.

Responsibilities of Elected Officials, Director of Personnel and Department Heads in Personnel Matters

Elected Officials and Department Heads are responsible for administering the Personnel Policies and Procedures in their respective departments.

County Council - Council has supervisory responsibilities for the employees in the Council office and the Election Bureau offices. Council, through its budget approval responsibilities, has the power to determine the number of positions in each department, to approve amendments to the Personnel Code including the pay plan, to approve the amount of compensation for elected and appointed officials, to ratify negotiated labor agreements and to approve the appointments to Boards and Authorities, as required by law.

County Executive - The County Executive is responsible for managing the administrative departments in County Government. His/her approval is required, before sending to Council, the annual budget, amendments to the Personnel Code, a new pay plan, a negotiated labor agreement, a resolution or appointment or recommended appointments of individuals to authorities, boards and commissions, as required by law.

Court of Common Pleas Judges - The President Judge is responsible for managing the employees working in the departments under the jurisdiction of the Courts.

Other Elected Officials - Elected officials are required to administer their departmental personnel matters in accordance with the Home Rule Charter and the Personnel Code.

Pennsylvania Code Statute 16, Section 1620 - Elected officials referenced in this section have considerable discretionary authority with respect to hiring, discharging and disciplining the employees in the departments under their jurisdiction.

Director of Personnel - The County Executive appoints the Director of Personnel. Section 6 of the Personnel Code identifies the Director of Personnel's responsibilities in matters of human resources administration. The most significant are: to develop, maintain and administer an up-to-date personnel code and pay plan, to supervise the job postings of job vacancies and determine which applicants fulfill the prerequisites as stated in the job notice, to maintain a personnel file for each employee, to administer the employee benefits programs and to negotiate and administer the labor agreements.

Department Heads - Department Heads are required to administer personnel administration matters in accordance with the Home Rule Charter and the Personnel Code and, if applicable to their department(s), the appropriate labor agreements(s).

LABOR RELATIONS

Unions (Bargaining Units) that Represent Erie County Employees

There are six bargaining units and two meet and discuss units in Erie County Government. The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) represent two bargaining units: a clerical/technical unit and a professional unit for Health, Library, Planning and Public Defender departments. The Pennsylvania Social Services Union (PSSU) represent three bargaining units: the Children & Youth professional employees, the Prison correctional officers, and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Erie County Office of Children and Youth First Level Supervisors, a meet and discuss unit. There are also two independent unions: Erie Court Association of Professional Employees (ECAPE), and Erie County Detectives Association (ECDA). The County has a meet and discuss relationship with the Court Supervisors.

Employees working in jobs represented by a union have the legal right to join or not join the union. Employees who choose to join pay full union dues; those who choose not to join are required by law to pay a “fair share fee” for union services rendered. If you work in a union/bargaining unit job, you may obtain a copy of the labor agreement from your union steward.

Consistency with Union Contracts

If there is an inconsistency between a provision of a labor agreement and a statute, law or ordinance; the statute, law or ordinance takes precedence.

If any part of this handbook provides for policies and/or procedures inconsistent with an employee union agreement, the union agreement shall prevail for those employees covered by that labor agreement.

POSITION CLASSIFICATION PLAN

The objective of a position classification program is to arrange County jobs in a hierarchy that reflects the relative value of each job. The value of a job is a reflection of the training and experience the job required, the nature and difficulty of the work incorporated into the job and the degree of responsibility, authority and accountability assigned to the job. These three factors determine the pay ranges for a job.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Erie County Government fully supports the principles and objectives of equal employment opportunity and affirmative action. It is unlawful to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, sex, disability, age, political affiliation, or national origin in any employment programs or practices including, but not limited to hiring, promotion, demotion, transfer, training, recruitment, layoff, termination, compensation and/or any other terms, privileges and conditions of employment within its control.

The County also has established a policy that prohibits sexual harassment at the workplace. The County has a written administrative procedure to deal with such complaints.

If you feel that you have been a victim of unlawful discrimination or sexual harassment, contact the Director of Personnel.

Probationary Period

New employees shall be regarded as probationary employees for the first ninety (90) calendar days of employment and shall not be entitled to benefits or other entitlements during this period unless stated otherwise in a specific section of this handbook.

Permanent appointments are based upon the satisfactory performance of employees during the probationary period, which for many employees is the first ninety (90) calendar days of employment, although certain departments or union contracts may have a six-month or a one-year probationary period for applicable employees. The probationary period following a promotion or transfer is usually ten (10) working days. The probationary period is intended to allow supervisors sufficient time to judge the employee's ability to perform the duties of the position.

At any time during the probationary period, the Department Director, with the approval of the Director of Personnel, may remove an employee if in his/her opinion the employee is unable or unwilling to perform the duties of the position satisfactorily.

Employees dismissed during their initial probationary period are not entitled to appeal their dismissals. However, if an employee feels that the dismissal is an act of unlawful discrimination, he/she may file a complaint with the Director of Personnel.

Performance Evaluations

The objective of performance evaluations is to inform employees about how well they are fulfilling their duties and responsibilities.

Performance evaluation is a continuous process which involves observation, discussion, written reports and review. It is a function of every department head and supervisor to be aware of the level of performance of employees under their supervision.

All employees will have their performance reviewed at the end of the probationary period, and thereafter, on an annual basis. This evaluation will offer constructive criticism on how the employee can improve his/her job performance and it will assist in making decisions concerning salary advancement, promotions, demotions, dismissals, order of layoff, order of re-employment, replacement and training needs.

All employees will be evaluated annually. Performance evaluation forms will be submitted to department heads at least two weeks prior to the date they are due to be returned to the Human Resources Department. Upon completion of the performance evaluation form, the supervisor should discuss the evaluation with the employee. The employee in turn will sign the evaluation form denoting that he/she has seen it and the outcome has been discussed with him/her. However, the signature on the form in no way signifies the employee's approval or disapproval, only that he/she has seen and discussed the evaluation.

Performance reviews are confidential and are available to be seen only by the employee involved, his/her supervisor, division head, department director, the Director of Personnel, the County Executive and the Appeals Board.

PAY POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Pay Rates & Pay Rate Adjustments for Non-Bargaining Employees

Non-bargaining employees are compensated in accordance with the Personnel Code - Section 7: Position Classification Plan, Section 8: Pay Plan, and Section 9: Pay Policies/Procedures. In brief, these sections stipulate that each non-bargaining job is evaluated into a pay grade, each grade has a minimum and a maximum range of pay rates and that each employee is paid a pay rate within the range.

Non-bargaining employees receive general pay rate increases as stipulated in the Pay Plan. A prerequisite for an employee to merit a general pay increase is a current and satisfactory performance review report, duly prepared and signed by the supervisor, department head and Director of Personnel. A pay rate increase of any kind is not permitted to carry an employee's pay rate above the maximum pay rate for the grade of the employee's job.

Pay Rate & Pay Rate Adjustments for Bargaining Employees

Bargaining employees are compensated in accordance with the applicable labor agreement.

Rate Adjustments Relating to a New Job Assignment

Lateral Transfer - When an employee transfers to a job with the same pay range as his/her current job, he/she will retain his/her current pay rate.

Promotion - When an employee is promoted to a job having a higher pay rate maximum, he/she will receive a pay rate increase to the minimum of the higher-grade job or an increase not to exceed 4.2%.

Demotion - Voluntary or Disciplinary - When an employee is demoted to a job having a lower pay rate maximum, he/she will receive a pay rate reduction to the maximum rate of the lower grade or 4.2% less than his/her current pay rate whichever is the lower rate.

Demotion – Involuntary due to Administrative/Reorganization Reasons - When, through no fault of the employee, he/she is demoted to a job with a lower pay rate maximum, the employee will retain his/her pay rate or their rate will be reduced to the maximum pay rate of the new job whichever is lower.

Temporary Assignment - An employee who is temporarily assigned in writing to a job having a higher pay rate maximum for three (3) or more consecutive work days will be paid the minimum rate of the higher job or a 3.0% pay rate increase whichever is greater for the period worked in the temporary assignment. If the temporary assignment is to a job having a lower pay rate maximum, the employee will retain his/her current pay rate.

Pay Checks

The Finance Department issues pay checks every other Thursday or Friday (26 pay checks per year). You have the option of direct deposit or to receive your paycheck. Either way, you will receive a payroll statement which lists the amounts of mandatory and voluntary deductions from your pay and the amounts of your unused vacation, personal, and sick leave hours.

Mandatory deductions are: Social Security Tax, Medicare Tax, Federal Withholding Income Tax, State Income Tax, Municipal Income Tax, Local Service (formerly known as the Occupational Privilege Tax) and EMS tax, the legally required 5% pension contribution (for employees who work 1000 or more hours per year), applicable employee co-payments for health insurance (for employees who choose to participate in such group plans), and fair share fee deductions may be required for certain employees who hold bargaining/union positions and who have not authorized deductions for union dues.

Voluntary deductions are: additional pension contributions (maximum total contribution of 15%), deferred savings plan contributions, credit union deductions, United Way contributions, employee welfare fund contributions, flex spending plan, and union dues.

Overtime

The Elected Officials or Department Heads will be the sole judge of the necessity for overtime and will advise the employee as to which form of compensation will be authorized before overtime is worked.

However, before authorizing any overtime work, the Elected Official or Department Head must be certain there are budget funds available to cover the payment of overtime. Overtime may be offered or discontinued at the sole discretion of the employee's supervisor or department head.

Eligible employees may elect to earn compensatory time rather than be paid overtime; the maximum accumulation of compensatory time is three days. Overtime for eligible employees is generally paid at 1½ times the employee's regular base rate for hours worked in excess of their normal work hours and compensatory time is generally earned by the same formula.

Certain employees such as Department Heads are not eligible for overtime payment or compensatory time.

Permanent part-time employees are paid straight time pay for hours worked up to the normal scheduled hours of their full-time counterparts or they may be granted straight compensatory time off. For hours worked in excess of the normal hours of their full-time counterparts, said employees will be entitled to choose either compensatory time or overtime pay.

Per diem employees are not eligible for compensatory time but are eligible for overtime pay for hours over 40 within a workweek; hours up to 40 in a workweek are paid at straight time.

Refer to your union labor agreement, the Personnel Code (Section 9) or other official overtime policies for specific provisions and eligibility.

Travel Expenses

Employees are paid the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) mileage allowable rate for using personal vehicles for County business.

Meal allowance for travel outside of Erie County is the IRS allowable rate for each quarter day traveling; a quarter day is 6:00 am to 11:59 am, 12:00 noon to 5:59 pm; 6:00 pm to 11:59 pm; and 12:00 midnight to 5:59 am.

For bargaining unit employees, mileage and meal allowances are in accordance with the applicable labor agreement.

Travel expense report forms can be obtained from the department of Finance/Accounting or on the county website under the Documents and Forms heading.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Work Hours

For the majority of employees, seven and one half (7.5) hours constitutes a normal workday; and 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, is the normal shift. Some departments operate 8 or 12 hours per day and some departments are operational seven days per week and twenty-four hours per day. Employees will be notified by their supervisor of the specific work hours for their department or job.

Attendance - Employees are expected to report for work on time and only be absent for a legitimate reason. Refer to the section of the handbook on Leave Benefits.

Lunch and Rest Periods - Full-time employees have a one-hour unpaid lunch period and two fifteen-minute paid rest periods.

The lunch period is normally taken around the middle of a work shift; one rest period is normally taken in the first half of a work shift and the other in the second half of the work shift.

Interfacing with the Public

As an employee of Erie County, you are a representative of the County in your work and in the community. You are responsible for working in accordance with these provisions:

1. **Never argue with the public**

Be a sympathetic and attentive listener, and try to understand the other person's point of view. It is true that you can never win an argument. The public will respect you if you refuse to argue, and you will soon find the opportunity to correct the situation.

2. **Make the public feel important**

They are the most important people who walk into the Courthouse or into any County office; therefore, be interested in their problems and make them feel that we appreciate them.

3. **Know what you are talking about**

Be sure of yourself, whenever giving information or advice. If you are not sure, get the correct information, or refer the individual to a better source. Do not risk misleading them. The impression we make on the public is the lasting impression they will have of County Government.

4. **Be neat**

Looking successful is a long way towards being successful. Cleanliness and a neat appearance are always attractive. If you are neat in appearance, you are more likely of being neat and acceptable in your work.

5. **Be tactful**

Being tactful is to do things in a considerate manner, rather than being rough and offensive. Never belittle others; consideration for their feelings is essential.

6. **Be cooperative**

This involves more than just getting along. Help the other person and add to the pleasantness of the job.

7. **Be efficient**

Perform your tasks in the quickest and most economical manner.

8. **Attendance**

An absent employee upsets the natural flow of any organization. Try to avoid unnecessary absences.

9. **Punctuality**

Habitual tardiness indicates a lack of interest in your job and consideration for those working with you. Be on time! Also, remember to remain at your work area until the scheduled quitting time.

10. **Attitude**

A job can be a source of happiness – it's up to you to make it so.

Telephone Courtesy

Your courtesy in using the telephone can create a positive impression of County Government and make work more pleasant for you and for those with whom you interact. In using the telephone, please keep in mind these recommended techniques:

1. Answer promptly - speak slowly and clearly.
2. Identify yourself by name and department.
3. Give accurate and careful answers.
4. Make accurate written notes of messages; deliver messages promptly.
5. Transfer calls tactfully.
6. Be free with please, thank you, and you are welcome.
7. Speak with a smile.
8. If a person or information is not readily available, ask to call the person back rather than leave someone holding on the line.
9. Remember when you leave the office, leave word as to where you can be reached.

Political Activity

All County employees are restricted in their political activity to the extent they may not:

1. Engage in political activity, including but not limited to the solicitation of funds during scheduled work hours.
2. Use or promise to use any official authority or influence to secure for any employee an increase in pay or other advantage in employment.
3. Attempt to force another public employee to contribute to any political cause.

Civil Service employees and employees directly under the direction of the Courts have more specific restrictions on political activities. If you work in one of these areas, contact your supervisor for more information regarding any restrictions that may apply to you.

Violation of this policy is recognized by Erie County as cause for dismissal.

EMPLOYEE WORK AND CONDUCT RESPONSIBILITIES

The purpose of this section is to inform County employees about the “work and personal conduct responsibilities” that each employee is expected to fulfill and the disciplinary action that will result for failing to fulfill a responsibility.

Six Principles which Govern Disciplinary Action:

1. Work responsibilities and work performance standards must be reasonable.
2. Employees must be aware of the work responsibilities and work performance standards for which they will be accountable.
3. The application of work responsibilities and work performance standards must be fair and consistent.
4. Disciplinary actions must be based on facts.
5. Disciplinary actions must be progressive.
6. A private counseling meeting, between the employee and the supervisor, who initiated the Responsibility Notice must be a part of each step in the disciplinary process.

Procedure Introductory Statement:

When it is ascertained that an employee has failed to fulfill a responsibility, which is identified below, the cognizant supervisor will investigate the incident and verify applicable facts; the supervisor will enlist the assistance of the Director of Personnel if a suspension or discharge is a potential action. The supervisor, after verifying that failure to fulfill responsibility did occur will prepare a Responsibility Notice.

The supervisor will have a confidential discussion with the employee for the purpose of reviewing the significance of the failure, if any. It is important to note that if the employee is a member of a bargaining unit, the procedure employed must be in accordance with the appropriate labor agreement, including having a union representative present in the confidential discussion, if the employee so chooses. If the employee is non-bargaining he/she can choose to have a fellow employee present during this discussion.

Any suspension must be reviewed with the Director of Personnel before it is imposed.

Section "A" Procedure for Failure to Fulfill a Responsibility:

An employee, who fails to fulfill a "Section A" responsibility, will merit the following disciplinary actions:

1. The first failure to fulfill any responsibility, within the past twelve (12) months, will merit a written verbal first responsibility notice.
2. The second failure to fulfill any responsibility, within the past twelve (12) months, will merit a written second responsibility notice.
3. The third failure to fulfill any responsibility, within the past twelve (12) months, will merit a written third responsibility notice and impose a one (1) day suspension without pay.
4. The fourth failure to fulfill any responsibility, within the past twelve (12) months, will merit a written fourth responsibility notice and impose three (3) days suspension without pay.
5. The fifth failure to fulfill any responsibility, within the past twelve (12) months, will merit a written fifth responsibility notice and impose discharge.

Section "A" Responsibilities:

1. Failure to maintain a quality or quantity work effort that is commensurate to a fair days work for a fair days pay.
2. Being tardy/late three (3) times within the past thirty (30) calendar day period.
3. Failure to call supervisor within one-half hour after start time of shift to report absence.
4. Two (2) unexcused absences within the past ninety (90) calendar day period or three (3) in a twelve (12) month period.
5. Excessive personal phone calls, which are not of an emergency nature.
6. Unauthorized time away from department work station or work area, including extending break periods.
7. Using profane or abusive language.
8. Quitting work early, before break period, lunch period or end of shift.
9. Being disruptive or discourteous with other employees.
10. Conducting personal or political business during work hours.
11. Not reporting a work related accident or injury within twenty-four (24) hours after its occurrence.
12. Littering County property or facilities.
13. Improper or inappropriate dress or grooming.

14. Reporting to work in a condition not conducive to effective work performance.
15. Misconduct-conduct which is inappropriate or unreasonable in light of the circumstances involved and is comparable to the failures delineated in this Section "A".

Section "B" Procedure for Failure to Fulfill a Responsibility:

An employee, who fails to fulfill a Section "B" responsibility, will merit the following disciplinary actions:

1. The first failure to fulfill a responsibility will merit a written responsibility notice and a suspension without pay for the number of days specified.
2. The second failure to fulfill a responsibility, within the past twenty-four (24) months, will merit a written responsibility notice and a suspension without pay for the number of days specified.
3. The third failure to fulfill a responsibility, within the past twenty-four (24) months, will merit a written responsibility notice, a suspension without pay and be subject to termination, pending an evaluation of the facts relating to the failure.

Section "B" Responsibilities:

1. Failure to comply with safety regulations - 1 day.
2. Being discourteous, impolite, rude or disrespectful to the public via face-to-face or phone contact - 1 day.
3. Defacing County or another employee's property - 2 days.
4. Misuse of sick days - 1 day for each day missed.
5. Being insubordinate or disrespectful in words or conduct with a supervisor - up to 4 days.
6. Relating false or derogatory information, which may injure the name or reputation of another employee - up to 5 days.
7. Accepting a gift or gratuity, which a reasonable person would perceive as an influence to compromise the recipient's integrity or his/her objective decision-making - up to 5 days.
8. Misconduct-conduct, which is inappropriate or unreasonable in light of circumstances involved and is comparable to the failures referenced in this Section "B" - suspension as warranted.

Section "C" Procedure for Failure to Fulfill a Responsibility:

An employee, who fails to fulfill a Section "C" responsibility will merit immediate suspension without pay, and be subject to termination, pending an evaluation of the facts relating to the failure.

Section "C" Responsibilities:

1. Threatening, intimidating, assaulting, battering or interfering with the well-being of a supervisor or another employee.
2. Falsification of employment or benefit documents or any document relating to County business or interests.
3. Possession, use or distribution on County property of an illegal or controlled substance such as marijuana, cocaine, opiates, amphetamines and phencyclidine.
4. Misuse of a legal drug.
5. Possession of unauthorized weapons or explosives on County property.
6. Working elsewhere during any paid or unpaid leave of absence.

7. Conduct, during work or non-work hours, which would cause a reasonable person to have an unsavory opinion about County employees or County operations.
8. Sexual harassment of any nature or degree.
9. Immoral or indecent acts.
10. Refuse to take a valid drug or alcohol test.
11. Misconduct-conduct which is inappropriate in light of circumstances involved and is comparable to the failures referenced in this Section "C".

Appeals Procedure

A non-bargaining employee wishing to appeal a disciplinary action or some aspect of his/her employment may do so in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Personnel code, Section 16 appeals Board.

A bargaining employee wishing to appeal a disciplinary action or some other aspect of his/her employment may do so in accordance with the applicable labor agreement.

LEAVE BENEFITS

The following leave policies (except for holidays, personal leave, sick leave, and vacation) apply equally to all permanent-status County employees.

Full-time employees are entitled to the amount of leave listed under holidays, personal leave, sick leave and vacation.

Regular part-time employees who work an average of at least twenty (20) hours per week are eligible for the equivalent percentage of holidays, personal leave, sick leave and vacation as their full-time counterparts.

Part-time professionals (whose bi-weekly salaries are based on an annual retainer) and part-time employees who work less than twenty (20) hours per week are **not** eligible for personal leave, sick leave and vacation, but are eligible for the appropriate holiday pay.

Temporary, seasonal, and per diem employees are **not** eligible to be compensated for holidays, personal leave, sick leave, vacation or any other time off work.

The various forms of leave are defined below:

Absence Without Leave

An employee who is absent from work without authorization will be considered absent without leave and will receive no compensation for the period of absence, and may be subject to disciplinary action. In the event that the unauthorized absence exceeds three (3) consecutive days, the employee will have automatically terminated his/her employment, unless compelling and mitigating circumstances prohibit the employee from properly notifying their supervisor within the three (3) day period.

Educational Leave

The objective of an educational leave of absence is to encourage you to further your education and return to service for the County.

After one (1) year of service, employees who request educational leave may be granted leave without pay for such purposes, not to exceed two (2) years, at the sole discretion of the department head and with the approval of the County Administration. An employee may continue all applicable health related benefits during an unpaid educational leave by paying one hundred percent (100%) of the County's cost.

Employees approved for tuition reimbursement may be reimbursed for 80% of the cost of tuition upon approval by the County Administration and County Council.

An employee who obtains a master's degree in a relevant course of study or successfully passes the National CPA exam will be entitled to the master's "add-on" of \$.50 per hour. The adjustment will be effective upon presentation of a copy of the degree and certification by the department head and the Director of Personnel. The master's add-on will be paid on base hours only and will be exclusive of any overtime or additional hours paid.

Funeral Leave (for death in the family)

For death of a legal close relative, the County provides a maximum of three (3) work days off with pay. Legal close relatives include: spouse, mother, father, daughter, son, sister, brother, grandparent, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, stepmother, stepfather, stepdaughter, or stepson.

For death of a legal near relative, the County provides a maximum of two (2) work days off with pay. Legal near relatives include: sister-in-law, brother-in-law, aunt, uncle, niece, or nephew.

If an employee needs additional time off for a listed relative, he/she must use vacation, personal or compensatory days or take leave without pay. If an employee would like time off to attend the funeral of a relative not listed in this section, he/she may request to use vacation, personal or compensatory time or take leave without pay.

Holidays

Every year a revised holiday list is posted in each department and in the Human Resources Department which lists the holidays, dates they are celebrated and the exceptions for some employees who will have different holidays, please refer to applicable labor agreement.

The holidays for most County employees (which may change in subsequent years) are:

New Year's Day	Independence Day
M.L. King's Birthday	Labor Day
Presidents Day	Veterans Day
Good Friday	Thanksgiving Day
Memorial Day	Day after Thanksgiving
Flag Day	Christmas Day
Employee's Birthday	Day after Christmas

All full-time and permanent part-time employees are entitled to holiday pay after competing thirty (30) calendar days of service provided they are in compensable status one half (1/2) day prior to the holiday and one-half (1/2) day after the holiday.

Eligible employees are to utilize their birthday holiday once per given calendar year within a fourteen (14) work day span immediately before or after their actual birthday. Exceptions to this rule apply to any employee whose birthday falls after December 15 or before January 15.

Jury Duty Leave

All County employees are urged to accept jury duty if called upon to do so. However, notification of court attendance must be given to your supervisor and the Human Resources Department in advance for approval. Employees must report to work before court convenes or after it adjourns in so far as it is practical.

Permanent-status employees summoned for jury duty or subpoenaed as a witness will be compensated the difference between their regular pay and the amount they receive for such duty. Per diem and temporary employees will not receive regular County pay, but will receive jury duty pay while serving jury duty.

Leave Without Pay

Employees may be granted leave without pay at the discretion of the department head and approval of the Director of Personnel for any legitimate reason.

When such leave is granted, the employee will be guaranteed his/her job or a comparable job provided the position is available when the employee is ready to return to work.

During an unpaid leave of absence an employee will not be entitled to accrue or receive any leave benefits; however, any benefits accrued prior to the leave will be restored to the employee upon return from the leave of absence. Upon return to work, the employee's service time for vacation earning purposes will be reduced to reflect the amount of service lost. An employee may continue all health related benefits during an unpaid leave of absence by paying the County's full cost of the benefits, unless the leave is for a medical reason (in which case the employee may continue coverage by paying their current co-pay share).

A leave of absence without pay is not to exceed two (2) years over a three (3) year time period and failure to return to duty upon completion of the leave will be interpreted as a resignation.

Maternity Leave

Notification - A pregnant employee must notify her supervisor and the Human Resources Department within sixty (60) days after her pregnancy has been diagnosed. The Employer will not require a pregnant employee to begin her maternity leave prior to childbirth unless she can no longer satisfactorily perform the duties of her position.

Leave Benefits & Insurance Benefits - Pregnant employees should pick up a copy of the official Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave Policy in the Human Resources Department which details leave and insurance benefits for permanent-status employees during maternity leave. Employees are responsible for contacting the Human Resources Department to obtain the proper insurance benefit paperwork. Employees must complete the insurance benefit paperwork and return to the Human Resources Department within 30 days of the birth or adoption. Paperwork not received within the 30 day timeframe may not be accepted.

Return to Work After Leave - An employee has the right to return to the same position in the same classification the employee held before going on maternity leave (or extended leave if granted) or to an equivalent position with regard to pay and skill, providing such position is available. An employee shall notify her supervisor at least two (2) weeks prior to her return of her intent to do so.

Paternity/Adoption Leave

Employees wishing to take paternity or adoption leave should pick up a copy of the official Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave Policy in the Human Resources Department which details leave and insurance benefits for permanent-status employees during said leave. Employees are responsible for contacting the Human Resources Department to obtain the proper insurance benefit paperwork. Employees must complete the insurance benefit paperwork and return to the Human Resources Department within 30 days of the birth or adoption. Paperwork not received within the 30 day timeframe may not be accepted.

Military Leave

Permanent-status employees who are members of the National Guard or Reserve components of the Armed Forces are entitled to leave with pay, not to exceed fifteen (15) days per calendar year during which they are engaged in field training authorized by the Federal forces or the State of Pennsylvania. However, you are required to present your military orders to your supervisor and the Human Resources Department two (2) weeks in advance for notification purposes.

If an employee is drafted or enlists in the military forces of the United States, he/she will be placed on military leave without pay. According to federal law, he/she has the right to reclaim employment providing service time does not exceed four (4) years duration.

Vacation Leave

Permanent-status employees will be credited for vacation time starting from their date of hire and will earn annual vacation credits for each month in which they are in compensable status for ten (10) or more working days. The rate at which employees earn vacation leave is based upon their length of continuous service.

The following vacation schedule applies to most County employees. Future updates of the vacation schedule can be seen in the union booklets, posted in your department, or in the Human Resources Department.

<u>Length of Service</u>	<u>Days earned Per month</u>	<u>Days earned Per year</u>
0 - 12 months (to 1 year)	.50	6
13 - 36 months (1 - 3 yrs)	1.00	12
37 - 72 months (3 - 6 yrs)	1.25	15
73 - 120 months (6 - 10 yrs)	1.50	18
121 - 180 months (10 - 15 yrs)	1.75	21
181 - 240 months (15 - 20 yrs)	2.08	25
241 months and over (20+ yrs)	2.50	30

When an employee enters a conversion month (a month when an employee becomes eligible to earn vacation at a higher rate because they have completed sufficient months of service), and the employee's anniversary date is on the 15th of the month or earlier, he/she will earn the higher vacation eligibility for that month. If the employee's anniversary date is on the 16th or later, he/she will not earn the higher vacation eligibility until the following month.

Vacation pay will be the employee's straight rate of pay in effect at the time he/she takes vacation. No more than thirty (30) vacation days may be carried over from calendar year to calendar year.

Vacations will be granted at the time requested by the employee. However, if the nature of the work makes it necessary to limit the number of employees on vacation at a work location or in a work unit at the same time, the employee who first requests a particular vacation period by means of a written and dated request shall be granted such period. In the event that two or more employees request the same vacation period at the same time, the employee with the longest service will be given first preference.

Any employee who is laid off, discharged, retired, or otherwise separated from employment with the County, will be compensated in cash for any unused accumulated vacation earnings as soon as possible after severance. In the event of death, such payment will be made to the employee's beneficiary.

At the department head's discretion, an employee may be granted vacation days not yet earned (to a maximum of current year eligibility). However, if the employee terminates employment, he/she must reimburse the County for those vacation days used but not yet earned.

Personal Leave Days

The purpose of personal leave days is to have time off to take care of personal matters such as physician or lawyer appointments, or parent-teacher conferences.

Non-bargaining permanent-status employees are eligible to earn two personal leave days in the first half of each year provided they **work** thirty (30) days in this six-month period and two personal leave days in the second half of each year provided they **work** thirty (30) days in this six month period. Unused personal leave days cannot be carried over from one year to the next.

Bargaining employees earn personal days in accordance with the applicable labor agreement.

At the department head's discretion, an employee may be granted a personal leave day before it is earned; however, if the employee terminates employment, he/she must reimburse the County for those personal leave days used but not yet earned.

Sick Leave

Permanent-status employees will be credited for sick leave at the rate of one and one quarter (1.25) days per month or fifteen (15) work days per year. Sick leave will be earned by an employee for any month in which the employee is in compensable status for ten (10) or more working days. Employees may accumulate an unlimited number of sick days that will be available for future use.

Sick leave may be used for bonafide illness or injury, but is not to be used for any other purpose.

A doctor's certificate may be required for an absence from work due to sickness for three (3) or more consecutive days. For absences less than three (3) days, a doctor's certificate may be required where, in the opinion of the department head, the employee is believed to be abusing sick leave privileges.

In the event that an employee will be absent, the employee must notify his/her department head within one hour after his/her regular starting time on the first day of absence. Employees who exceed expected duration must also call in the additional days in order to receive paid sick leave.

When necessary, and at the discretion of the department head, an employee may be granted sick leave not yet earned to a maximum of fifteen (15) days or the employee's eligibility for the current calendar year, whichever is the lesser amount. However, employees who leave the employment of the County and who have been paid for sick days not yet earned must reimburse the County for such days.

Non-bargaining permanent-status employees may use a maximum of twelve (12) of their accumulated sick leave days per calendar year where sickness in the immediate family (parents, spouse, or children of the employee residing in the employee's household) require the employee's absence from work. Bargaining employees should refer to their labor agreement. The department head may require proof of such family sickness.

Family Medical Leave

Employees who average twenty-five (25) or more work hours per week and who have completed one year of service are eligible for up to twelve (12) weeks (60 work days) of unpaid family medical leave during a 12-month period for such reasons as birth, adoption, placement of a foster child or to care for an immediate family member who is seriously ill. Employees will be required to use their eligible vacation and personal leave prior to being granted unpaid family medical leave. If reasonably possible, the employee should give thirty (30) days advance notice. The department head or the Human Resources Department may require a verification of medical condition to support the necessity of the leave of absence.

Employees covered by health insurance will be entitled to continued coverage during a family medical leave at the employee's normal premium co-pay/cost up to 12 weeks. If additional leave is requested and granted beyond the initial 12 weeks, the employee will be required to pay the full cost of their health insurance to have continued coverage.

Employees may also be eligible, in certain situations, for paid leave and/or unpaid leave beyond twelve (12) weeks as provided in the maternity/paternity/adoption leave or (employee's own) medical leave sections of this handbook.

INSURANCE BENEFITS

Health Insurance

Permanent status employees of the County are eligible to enjoy the benefits of our Group Health Plans after completing three (3) continuous months of service. The health insurance programs include dependent coverage.

This coverage is offered at a minimal cost to full-time employees. Employees working twenty (20) or more hours per week but less than full-time may purchase health insurance at an increased rate. Notice of full and part-time rates is distributed annually during the open enrollment period. Employees working less than twenty (20) hours per week may purchase health insurance at one hundred percent (100%) of County cost.

Benefit forms and supporting documentation must be received in the Human Resources Department within 30 days of your hire date or you may not be eligible to participate in the County benefit plan. Please call the Human Resources Department immediately if you have an issue returning your forms or providing supporting documentation.

Supporting documents need to add dependents:

To add a spouse: Copy of marriage license

To add dependent child/children: Copy of birth certificate and social security card

The Benefits Coordinator in the Human Resources Department will assist employees with explanations of the health insurance benefits. Bargaining unit employees should refer to their labor agreement for specific benefit coverage to which they are entitled.

Health and Welfare Benefits

Permanent-status employees are entitled to County benefits such as dental care and vision care benefits after completing three (3) continuous months of service. These programs include dependent coverage. This coverage is offered at no cost to full-time employees. Part-time employees working twenty (20) or more hours per week may purchase the same benefits offered to full-time employees at an increased rate while employees working less than twenty (20) hours per week will be required to pay one hundred percent (100%) of County costs.

There are different insurance carriers for non-union and union employees for health and welfare benefits. Please remember this when you pick up insurance forms in the Human Resources Department. Bargaining unit employees should refer to their labor agreement for specific benefit coverage to which they are entitled.

Updating/Changing Health Benefit Information

Once a year during the open enrollment period employees are allowed to change their health benefits such as adding or removing dependents. Outside of the open enrollment period, an employee can enroll, change your enrollment to single or dependent coverage or cancel coverage only in connection with certain qualifying life events.

A qualifying life event is defined by the County of Erie as termination of employment, change in County employment status (such as part-time status to full-time status or change in bargaining unit) marriage, divorce, birth of a child, death of dependent, or spouse/child loses health insurance coverage. An employee must provide supporting documentation of a life event to the Human Resources Department (marriage certificate, divorce decree, birth certificate& social security card, certificate of death, termination letter from insurance company).

Employees meeting the criteria of a qualifying life event must contact the Human Resources Department immediately, complete the appropriate paperwork and provide supporting documentation to the Human Resources Department within 30 days of the qualifying life event. Failure to provide the appropriate paperwork and supporting documentation within the 30 day period may result in denial of the requested change. Employees unable to provide supporting documentation within the 30 day period should contact the Human Resources Department immediately.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) – Assistance for Personal Problems

The purpose of the EAP is to provide for you or your legal dependent a professional counseling service to assist you in resolving personal problems relating to marital and family issues, stress and anxiety, grief and depression, alcohol and drug abuse and other disruptive situations. The EAP will cover the cost of up to three outpatient-counseling sessions; thereafter, you should investigate your insurances to determine what, if any, inpatient or outpatient crisis treatment is available.

All aspects of this program are administered in a completely confidential manner. To participate, you may either self-refer by directly calling the EAP Services toll-free number, or you may contact the Employee Resources Manager in the Human Resources Department or the Director of Personnel and request the opportunity to receive EAP services. Knowledge of your inquiry is limited only to these two personnel executives, and you will not be required to reveal any aspect as to the reason for your request. EAP informational pamphlets are available to all employees in the Human Resources Department.

Life Insurance

All permanent full-time employees, after completing three (3) continuous months of service, are covered by life insurance for death, accidental death, and dismemberment at no charge. Permanent part-time employees may purchase a \$10,000 life insurance policy at 50% or 100% of County cost depending on hours worked. However, this coverage ends upon retirement or termination of employment and the employee must notify the representative of the County's present carrier if they wish to convert to a private plan. The employee will have the option to buy up to the amount of coverage they had as an active employee.

Worker's Compensation

Erie County carries Worker's Compensation Insurance in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the protection of County employees.

If an employee is involved in an accident or sustains an injury on duty, he/she must report it to his/her supervisor or department head immediately. The supervisor must then complete an accident report and submit it to the Human Resources Department within twenty-four (24) hours of the accident. If the employee is in need of medical care resulting from the injury, the employee must seek initial treatment from one of the health care providers designated by the County.

Any permanent-status employee who sustains a work-related injury as a result of which he/she is disabled if so determined by a decision issued under the operation of the Worker's Compensation program, shall be paid the difference between the monies to which he/she may be entitled under Worker's Compensation, Social Security, or other applicable disability benefits and his/her full salary

for a period of one (1) year, or for the duration of his/her disability, whichever is less. The employee will be paid a supplement to worker's compensation of full pay reduced by an amount that yields a net pay, including worker's compensation and social security disability benefits, that is equal to the employee's net pay immediately prior to the injury. Net pay prior to injury is defined as gross base pay minus federal, state, and local withholding, unemployment compensation tax, Social Security and retirement contributions.

Employees shall not accrue any sick leave or holiday entitlements throughout the duration of any work-related disability, and upon return to work, their entitlements shall be proportionately reduced. Vacation days may be earned to a maximum of one half (½) the normal entitlement during any one disability for a maximum of ten (10) days.

Termination of Benefits

Upon terminating your County employment, either voluntarily or involuntarily for cause, your current insurance benefits cease. A non-bargaining employee who is involuntarily terminated without cause will retain the following County provided insurance benefits for three full months subsequent to the ending date of the month such involuntary termination without cause occurs: medical, prescription drugs, dental, and vision. A bargaining employee who is involuntarily terminated without cause will retain County provided insurance benefits as determined by the applicable labor agreement.

You may be entitled to hospital/medical insurance if you retire with a monthly County pension and you meet the age, years of service and other requirements of the coverage plan. The Human Resources Department will notify you regarding insurance conversion options and COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act) options that will be available to you.

Please contact the Controller's Office regarding any pension benefits to which you may be entitled.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Employee I.D. Badges

In an attempt to provide a safe and secure work environment for all employees and to provide immediate recognition of employees and visitors, the County will provide a picture identification (I.D.) badge to each employee upon hire. Employees are required to wear their I.D. badges during working hours, while on any of the County premises or when conducting any County-related business outside of County premises.

The initial I.D. badge and one replacement will be furnished at no cost to the employee; however, there will be a charge for additional replacements. Upon termination of employment, I.D. badges are to be turned in to the Human Resources Department.

Updating Personnel Information

Most people face many changes in their personal lives during their working years. Some may be as simple as a change of address or telephone number, or the happy event of a marriage, birth or adoption; others may involve death or divorce.

To insure that your personnel, insurance and payroll records are kept up-to-date, always notify the Human Resources Department promptly (by completing an Employee Update Form) of any changes in your personal situation which may include:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Address | 6. Military classification |
| 2. Telephone number | 7. Name of person to contact in case of emergency |
| 3. Names of legal dependents | 8. Name change |
| 4. Marital status | 9. Change in your withholding tax (W-4 form) |
| 5. Life insurance and pension beneficiary | 10. Health insurance situation |

Having the correct personal information on file with the Human Resources Department will affect the speed with which you receive official mail, coverage of your dependents on your group insurance plans, the amount of withholding tax deducted from your pay, and many other things important to you.

If an employee fails to notify the Human Resources Department in writing within thirty (30) calendar days after the date that a dependent is or is not entitled to County sponsored insurance coverage, or enrolls an individual for County sponsored dependent coverage and such individual is not entitled to such dependent insurance coverage, he/she will be subject to disciplinary action including discharge and will be responsible for reimbursing the County for any expenses incurred by the County.

Access to Personnel Records

Upon request, employees may see the records maintained in their own personnel folder during regular working hours, provided that the time involved does not interfere with the normal routine of the office. Employees may not remove from or make copies of records in their personnel folder.

Personal Phone Calls

Business telephone traffic to and from Erie County offices is heavy. To insure that services to the taxpayers we serve are not affected, employees are requested to restrict personal calls during working hours to those that are absolutely necessary and to keep them as brief as possible (this includes the use of your own personal cell phone). Upon the approval of the employee's supervisor, necessary long distance personal telephone calls may be charged to a County-issued authorization/billing code; the cost of such calls must be paid for by the employee immediately upon receipt of the telephone charges. Repeated violations of personal phone calls, including cell phone usage, or any violation of the use of long distance may result in disciplinary action.

Computer and Internet Use

County computers are intended for County work-related purposes only. If an employee needs to use the computer/internet for other purposes during working hours, he/she must obtain approval from his/her supervisor prior to such usage. Violations of computer/internet use will be subject to disciplinary action.

Resignation/Retirement

All employees who voluntarily terminate or retire from their employment must notify their supervisor and the Director of Personnel in writing stating the effective date and reason for their termination. Employees should turn in the written letter at least two (2) weeks before the effective date. Employees in supervisory positions should give at least four (4) week notice. This allows time for recruitment, selection and training of the employee's replacement.

The last day the employee works will be his/her last day of official employment with the County. Employment may not be extended by the use of vacation or personal days. A terminating employee will be paid a lump sum for those earned but unused vacation and personal days.

A non-bargaining employee who is involuntarily terminated without cause will be paid for his/her accumulated earned sick days at the ratio of one (1) day pay for every four (4) unused sick days. A non-bargaining employee who is involuntarily terminated with cause will not be entitled to any payment for accumulated earned unused sick days. A non-bargaining employee who voluntarily terminates his/her employment will be not be entitled to any payment for accumulated earned unused sick days, except in the instance of retirement, as evidenced by receiving a monthly pension payment for the month immediately subsequent to his/her retirement date, in which case the retiree will be paid for accumulated earned unused sick days at the ratio of one (1) day pay for every six (6) unused sick days. A bargaining employee whose employment is voluntarily or involuntarily terminated with or without cause will receive pay for accumulated earned unused sick days in accordance with the applicable labor agreement.

Department heads are encouraged to conduct exit interviews when an employee leaves the County to gain valuable information concerning employee turnover. Employees leaving the employ of the County are required to return any County property, including keys, credit cards, beeper, cell phone, County I.D. badge, and all insurance cards.

Credit Union

The Credit Union is a non-profit organization that provides employees with special financial benefits. These benefits include attractive saving, checking, and loan programs by which deposits and/or payments are made automatically through voluntary payroll deductions.

Membership in the Erie County Federal Credit Union is open to all County employees and their immediate families. Please call or visit the Credit Union office for more information.

Employee Campaigns

Erie County government highly supports and encourages voluntary payroll deductions from employees for the United Way Program and the Employees Welfare Fund. Employees are also highly commended for regular blood donations to the Erie Blood Bank.

Safety and Health

Accident on Duty - Fortunately, accidents rarely occur to County employees. However, if an employee is involved in an accident or sustains an injury while on duty, they need to report it to their supervisor and the Human Resources Department within twenty-four (24) hours. This should be done regardless of how minor the accident may seem at the time. Doing this permits the County to protect employees in case the injury requires treatment either immediately or in the future.

Try to prevent accidents before they happen by thinking ahead. Keep the area adjacent to your work location free and uncluttered and report to your supervisor immediately about any unsafe condition which you may observe.

Emergencies:

Fire Prevention - Every employee should recognize the importance of preventing fires. Locate the fire alarm box nearest your work area and read the instructions carefully. Learn where exits, fire equipment, and emergency supplies are located. If you should discover a fire, do not try to fight it yourself; pull alarm, notify switchboard of location of the fire, and evacuate immediately.

Evacuation - Walk in an orderly fashion to the nearest exit. Remember: NEVER use the elevator during a fire or fire drill. Listen to instructions, remain quiet, and do not panic.

First Aid - Within the Courthouse, first aid boxes are located on the first, second, and third floors. –Employees in the Courthouse and at other County Offices are encouraged to ask their supervisor about the exact location of first aid kits. A list of CPR certified County employees is also included with the first aid kits. If you are CPR certified or would like to become certified and be included on the list, contact the Safety Committee (c/o Department of Administration).

Emergency Procedures - Only at the discretion of the County Executive will County offices be closed for snow, floods or other natural disasters.

County Property

County equipment and supplies are expensive and costly to repair or replace. Please use them carefully and economically. They are not to be taken off County premises without permission.

Smoking

As a result of the Clean Indoor Act of 2008 smoking is prohibited on all County property or in vehicles leased by the County in which individuals are transported. Employees should familiarize themselves with the County ordinance #157 of 2008 implementing a County wide smoking ban.

Bulletin Boards

The official County bulletin boards located throughout the Courthouse and other office locations are used primarily by the Human Resources Department for posting job openings. However, County employees may post material on the bulletin boards provided it has been signed, dated, and clearly identified as to the source. No material may be posted if it is profane, obscene, or defamatory to the employer or to any individual or if it is election campaign material.

Each department should have a departmental bulletin board for the posting of information directly related to the specific department.